

THE ADVENTURES OF DOCTOR DOLITTLE

Continuing the History of His Peculiar
Life at Home and His Astounding
Experiences in Foreign Lands

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PREVIOUS CHAPTERS—Dr. Dolittle is a kindly physician. He neglects his practice in order to treat sick animals, and finally is left alone with Polynesia, the parrot; Chee-Chee, the monkey; Jip, the dog, and Toots, the owl. From Polynesia Dr. Dolittle learns to understand and talk the language of animals. A swallow brings from Africa the news of a terrible illness among the monkeys there. They have heard of Dr. Dolittle and beg him to come to them, which he does. On the way to the country of the monkeys Dr. Dolittle and his pets are imprisoned by the King of the Jolliginki. They are rescued by the Doctor, who treats the sick ones. He leaves on his return journey, after a farewell feast and many presents from the grateful monkeys.

THERE were many quarrels and scrimmages for the honor of carrying his trunks and bags. And for hours before his party could start the Doctor was delayed by groups of different kinds of monkeys, who kept coming up to present him with something to show their gratitude. Besides the grand present of the pushmipullyu the Doctor had to accept many other tokens and souvenirs; a barrel of honey from the chimpanzees, a palm-leaf hammock from the mangabeys, an ebony armchair from the dog-faced baboons and a cocoanut matting bath towel from the gorillas, with his initials embroidered on the corner.

When they came to the edge of the river they stopped to say farewell.

This took a long time, because all those thousands of monkeys, every single one of them, wanted to shake John Dolittle by the hand.

Afterward, when the Doctor and his pets were going on alone, Polynesia said: "We must tread softly and talk low as we go through the land of the Jolliginki. If the King should hear us he will send his soldiers to catch us again, for I am sure he is still very angry over the trick I played on him."

"What I am wondering," said the Doctor, "is where we are going to get another boat to go home in. . . . Oh, well, perhaps we'll find one lying about on the beach that nobody is using. 'Never lift your foot 'till you come to the stile.'"

One day while they were passing through a very thick part of the forest Chee-Chee went ahead of them to look for cocoanuts. And while he was away the Doctor and the rest of the animals, who did not know the jungle paths so well, got lost in the deep woods. They wandered around and around, but could not find their way to the seashore.

Chee-Chee, when he could not see them anywhere, was terribly upset. He climbed high trees and looked out from the top branches to try and see the Doctor's high hat; he waved and shouted; he called to all the animals by name. But it was no use. They seemed to have disappeared altogether.

Then Chee-Chee sat down and thought a while. The idea came to him that perhaps if he went back to the spot where he had parted from them to go off on his food-hunting expedition he might be able to track them by footprints or broken bushes and so find out which way they had strayed.

So, carefully storing away the fruits and nuts he had collected, Chee-Chee re-

traced his steps till he came to the place where he had last seen the Doctor and his party. Then by examining the ground with great care (he was an excellent and a cunning woodsman, was Chee-Chee) he found the marks of John Dolittle's big boots left in the soft earth.

Full of new hope, he now set off to follow these tracks, and for some miles he was successful. But the tracks led him at last to a wide, shallow river, which clearly the party must have crossed.

Chee-Chee, at some risk of getting drowned, plunged into the river, and, by wading, floundering and swimming, reached the other side.

He expected, of course, to find the Doctor's tracks again on the opposite bank. But to his great disappointment no footprints on the further shore could he find. He hunted up and down the stream's bank for a mile each way, but he could

discover not a single sign to show which way his friends had gone.

Indeed, the Doctor and his party had lost their way very badly. They had strayed a long way off the path, and the jungle was so thick with bushes and creepers and vines that sometimes they could hardly move at all, and the Doctor had to take out his pocketknife and cut his way along. They stumbled into wet, boggy places; they got all tangled up in thick convolvulus runners; they scratched themselves on thorns, and twice they nearly lost the medicine bag in the underbrush. There seemed to be no end to their trouble.

Finally they had come upon a stream. And after they had rested for a while and refreshed themselves with the cool water the Doctor decided that if they followed the river down stream it would surely lead them sooner or later to the sea.

This, of course, in a way was true, but this particular stream was a very twisty, winding one. And after the Doctor had followed it for some miles, splashing along in the shallow water (that was why no footprints were left behind and poor Chee-Chee could not track them), they saw that it would be no use trusting to the stream to bring them to the sea, because it clearly flowed hundreds of miles, this way and that, before it got there.

So, watching the setting sun for direction, John Dolittle left the water and started off through the jungle once more.

But very soon they came to another wide swamp—just as the night was falling. And the poor Doctor told his pets that they would have to rest there till the morning. Although he cheered them up as best he could by making a joke of their troubles, John Dolittle was really quite discouraged. For by this time he had not the slightest idea of where in the world he was—not even whether he was close to the sea or near the King's palace or back again by the edge of the Land of the Monkeys.

The next day the Doctor's party had no better luck. And at last, after blundering about for many days, getting their clothes torn and their faces covered with mud, they walked right into the King's back garden by mistake. The King's men came running up at once and caught them.

But Polynesia flew into a tree in the garden without anybody seeing her and hid herself. The Doctor and the rest were taken before the King.

"Ha, ha!" cried the King. "So you are caught again! This time you shall not escape. Take them all back to the prison and put double locks on the door. This White Man shall scrub my kitchen floor for the rest of his life!"

So the Doctor and his pets were led back to prison and locked up. And the Doctor was told that in the morning he must begin scrubbing the kitchen floor.

They were all very unhappy.

"This is a great nuisance," said the Doctor. "I really must get back to Puddleby. That poor sailor will think I've stolen his ship if I don't get home soon. . . . I wonder if those hinges are loose."

But the door was very strong and firmly locked. There seemed no chance of getting out. Then Gub-Gub began to cry again.

All this time Polynesia was still sitting in the tree in the palace garden. She was saying nothing and blinking her eyes.

This was always a very bad sign with Polynesia. Whenever she said nothing and blinked her eyes it meant that somebody had been making trouble and she was thinking out some way to put things right. People who made trouble for Polynesia or her friends were nearly always sorry for it afterward.

Presently she spied Chee-Chee swinging through the trees, still looking for the Doctor. When Chee-Chee saw her he came into her tree and asked her what had become of him.

"The Doctor and all the animals have been caught by the King's men and locked up again," whispered Polynesia. "We



Grateful Monkeyland's farewell feast to Doctor Dolittle